

Wrestling Perspective

• Analysis and Commentary From The McLaughlin Group of Professional Wrestling •

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The House Show Angle and The Supercard... R.I.P.

In 1981, the WWWF did an untelevised angle at a house show that was, simply put, fantastic. Pat Patterson was the guest ring announcer for a card and after the newly-arrived Magnificent Muraco had disposed of Rick Martel, he told Pat to feel the electricity and offered Pat his hand. When Patterson turned away, Muraco suddenly jumped him from behind, clobbered him with the microphone and eventually put a reverse piledriver on him. Patterson was stretchered out as the fans went crazy. It was announced later on in the card that a match between Muraco and Patterson had just been signed for next month when the WWWF was to return to town. The crowd popped and everybody leaving was discussing how Patterson was going to kill Muraco in the return bout. When the WWWF came back to town a month or so later, most everyone who was at the last card was there. A number of new fans, who had been told by friends what happened the last time, showed up as well. There were also localized interviews discussing what happened the last time Muraco and Patterson were in town and how Patterson was going to get revenge. The heat for the return bout was tremendous. In case your wondering, Patterson did virtually destroy Muraco, but didn't win the Intercontinental Title as Muraco was disqualified. It really didn't matter since Patterson gained his revenge.

The WWWF probably did that angle at most every house show during that particular tour. It was rather simple, yet it generated tremendous interest in the return match and got a number of fans to return the next month. This was rather common 10 years ago, when wrestling promotions tried to make house shows special. Bob Backlund often got "injured" during his first title defense in a particular town and the next month would return against the same opponent. If there wasn't an angle involving Backlund, something else happened to encourage the fans to return the next month.

Remember the Georgia Championship Wrestling shows from the early 1980's? Most every show had some sort of angle during it. If there wasn't an angle in the studio that week, there was something controversial that happened at the Omni ready to be aired. There was consistently a reason to come out to the house show because there was some sort of angle surrounding most every match and something was bound to happen at the show to make the fans return the next time they came to town.

Times have changed. House shows are no longer the big money maker for the two major U.S. promotions. PPV has replaced the house show as the major cash cow for wrestling promotions. In turn, they have substantially reduced the amount of effort they put into providing quality house shows. When is the last time you went to a house show where a hot angle was done to get you to come back next month? It is this lack of commitment to house shows that has lowered their overall quality and, equally important, their overall turnout. When the NWA and WWF talk about the trend away from house shows and towards Pay-Per-Views, they must ask themselves when was the last time they gave the fans something really special at the house shows. Chances are they will have to think for a long time.

While the trend towards PPV has caused a decrease in the quality and effort put into house

shows, it is more surprising to see that the emphasis on the PPV has resulted in a decrease in the number of Supercards presented by each group. Think back to Starrcade '88. You may remember it as Dusty's swansong, or where Lex failed for the second time on a PPV. You may also remember it as the first televised Midnight Express versus Midnight Express match. There was also Windham vs. Bigelow and we finally got to see Rick Steiner go up against Mike Rotunda. Every match had some importance to it. Even Ivan Koloff and the Junkyard Dog versus the Russian Assassins had an angle. It was a special card that was built up by a number of well-booked angles and well-performed skits. The buy rate may not have been anything to brag about, but it was good show and one that had an aura of specialness surrounding it.

Take a look at WrestleWar '90. It was, for all intent and purpose, a one-match card. While the NWA did try to create angles around the Road Warriors/Skyscrapers confrontation and the Freebirds/Z-Man & Pillman match, they really did not generate a great deal of interest in any of the matches with the exception of the main event. The Steiners/Andersons match had a quick angle done about a week before the card. The battle of the Expresses, easily the second best match on the card, had very little done to promote it as an important match. As for the Dynamic Dudes versus Kevin Sullivan and Buzz Sawyer and the Norman/Cactus Jack match, the fans had no clue to why these matches were of any importance. WrestleWar '90 turned into a two-match card. One of those matches had a terrible screw job finish.

In less than a year, the NWA went from producing the most consistently excellent PPVs in the industry (Starrcade '88, Chi-Town Rumble '89, WrestleWar '89 and The Bash), to one-match cards like Halloween Havoc and WrestleWar '90. With the WWF presenting one-match nightmares, the fans had counted on the NWA to provide them with the kind of Supercards one should expect from a PPV. Instead, the NWA changed direction and gave us Halloween Havoc with the legendary Tommy Rich/Cuban Assassin match.

All PPVs should be Supercards. It is that simple. Every match should have meaning and some type of angle. While the main event is going to sell most of the PPV orders, the undercard can be a difference for marginal buyers. More importantly is that when a fan pays between \$15 to \$30 for a PPV, he/she deserves an excellent card. The growing talk about PPV saturation would be groundless if both organizations were consistently presenting Supercards that peaked the fans interest up and down each card. Instead, they have taken the easy way out by promoting one match cards which are simpler to book and require less thought. The problem with this philosophy is that the fans will get tired of paying for events that are meaningless or only have one worthwhile match. The promotions aren't thinking of PPV as a long-term revenue source when they present these types of cards. Rather, they are looking for the quick buck with each PPV. This may have some short-term benefits, but there will be long-term problems.

It would make much more sense for both organizations to limit themselves to four PPVs per year and make each one of them as good as possible from the opening match to the closing main event. Each show could give the fans something special and this would help prevent PPV burnout. Capital Combat '90 may prove to be a Supercard in the end. The matches, on paper, look like they should be excellent, particularly with the new booker, Ole Anderson, coming in. The only problem is that the NWA never sold it as a Supercard. Instead, they sold it as a one-match show. The rest of the matches have been played to death on television or have little importance. While they have attempted to create some angles around a few of the matches, there is very little on the card that is fresh. Why would anyone want to watch Johnny Ace versus Mark Callous, and The Samoans versus Mike Rotunda and Tommy Rich? While these are preliminary openers, they should have some meaning if they are on a PPV. Otherwise, they have no business being there.

The house show angle and the Supercard go hand in hand. They represent the promoters commitment to entertaining the fans. The more effort a promotion puts into making its house shows special, the more they will benefit. When Supercards live up to and exceed

the fans' expectations, the promoters benefit. Giving the fans something they want or something special shouldn't be considered taboo. It's sound business. Until the NWA and the WWF realize this, we will be stuck with one-match cards and house shows that lack the excitement, spontaneity and creativity. It's time for the NWA and WWF to remember the business principle of "Deliver more than what you promise." Considering the talent both organizations have, it shouldn't be a debatable topic. The question then remains why are they trying to deliver less?

Sidelines

The Response to our "How to save the Independents" idea was overwhelming. We received no articles. If any reader still wishes to submit an article on the independents we would be happy consider it for publication. However, we may have to wait until our publication grows a bit more before we attempt an idea like that again. As Paul told J.D. McKay in a letter about Wrestling Perspective; some ideas are going to work and some are going to bomb.

The Save The Funker Campaign is one of the most worthy causes today. To participate, please send a card or letter telling the NWA what a mistake it is for them to lose Tuxedo Terry Funk. Write to: World Championship Wrestling, One CNN Center - Box 105366, Atlanta Georgia 30348-5366. Let's get together and save the Funker.

Capital Combat '90 • Everything in this issue was written prior to Capital Combat '90, with the exception of our Capital Combat '90 report that appears after the letters section. We held back sending out this issue until CC '90 as we figured that it would be an important show worth commenting on. Let's hope the show was worth the wait.

RWRB Sushi is a twice a month (or so) bulletin put out by Jeff Mullins. This is one of the funniest sheets available today. Jeff has a number of entertaining features and occasionally takes time out for some serious commentary as well. The April 30, 1990 issue had a hysterical story about the Beverly triplets and a Sting coloring contest spoof that had us rolling out of our chairs. This isn't a news sheet, but it is very entertaining and a nice change of pace. RWRB Sushi is available for \$1.00 per issue from Jeff Mullins (make checks payable to him) PO Box 36189, San Jose, CA 95158.

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Video Tape Review

By - Paul J. MacArthur

Bloody Battle Royals

I saw an ad on superstation WWOR late one night advertising a wrestling video featuring classic matches with Dusty Rhodes, Dick Murdoch, Wahoo McDaniel, Ox Baker and Ernie Ladd. Figuring this was a tape of classic juicfest wrestling from the seventies, I ordered it hoping to watch some great wrestling from before my time. Major disappointment. The tape begins with an obnoxious host who, for an entire hour, assumes the viewer's IQ is

equal to his shoe size. The original commentary has been replaced with our ever offensive host treating us to such lines as "Call the fire department!" and "Now let's watch a midget get zonked." This has to be the biggest insult to wrestling fans in existence today; more so than the push of Dino Bravo. The matches themselves are all right, but they have been edited and without the original commentary there is a great deal lost. The end result is a video with fair to good matches ruined by terrible announcing and some editing. To their credit, VCA Teletronics did refund my money when I returned the tape to them with a note telling them what I thought of their product. *Not Recommended Under Any Circumstances.*

Bloody Battle Royals is available from VCA Teletronics, 50 Leyland Drive, Leonia, NJ 07605 or call 1-800-333-0901 for \$33.95.

Because Announcers Are Expendable

By - David Skolnick

They've done it again. The NWA has lost two tremendous announcing talents, Chris Cruise and Terry Funk, and are too stubborn to hire them back. The promotion probably feels secure since they recently rehired Tony Schiavone and Paul E. Dangerously but, by letting Cruise and Funk go, they've lost one of the best announcing duos in wrestling.

Hiring Cruise and Funk last year was a gamble since both had limited wrestling announcing experience, but that risk paid off. The duo built a strong relationship and were able to direct that energy into the broadcasts. After only a few months, Cruise had established himself as a rising star and was already one of the five best play-by-play men in the business. Funk, meanwhile, was the old veteran who could provide valuable insight into the game as well as having comic presence. However, the NWA saw fit to break up the duo and, eventually, forced them both to leave. The way Cruise was treated was extremely unprofessional and it would serve the NWA right if he were to wind up with the WWF. The way Funk quit was not proper, but according to some reports, the company left him with no alternative but to step down. While Schiavone deserves to be in charge of the syndicated programming, dumping Funk like yesterday's garbage proves this promotion can have very little class at times. Schiavone and Dangerously will succeed in the NWA, but the promotion shouldn't have let Cruise and Funk go.

There is little hope that Funk and Cruise will be hired back by the NWA and that is a major mistake. Both men can offer so much to the promotion, but for now, they will not be able to contribute a thing. There is plenty of room for Crispy Cruiser and Tuxedo Terry if the promotion made some adjustments. No matter how good Jim Ross is, he is on too many programs and over exposure can be a problem. If the NWA rehired Cruise and Funk to work the Power Hour, Ross could have some well-deserved rest, the public wouldn't grow tired of him and the NWA would have a great team working Friday nights. Ross could keep on working all his other shows. Personally, I would fire Missy Hyatt and allow Dangerously to work the NWA Main Event spot with Ross. Dangerously's sharp-wit and keen wrestling mind always lends some excitement to a telecast. Simply put, Missy Hyatt has to go. She has been given time to become comfortable with the show, but she remains awkward and uneasy in front of the cameras. Men love to look at her, but she is a terrible announcer. She has no mind for wrestling reasoning. She's unable to go through a segment without stumbling over a line and she laughs at her own jokes before the punch line.

The NWA has a great deal of announcing talent, but there is room for change and improvement. The promotion has recently made some progress rehiring talented

performers like Schiavone and Dangerously but releasing Cruise and Funk is a characteristic NWA two steps forward one step backwards move. There is progress, but it is slower than it should be.

The NWA in The Northeast - A Tale of Two Cities

By - Paul J. MacArthur

The NWA was scheduled to appear in two Central New York cities in two weeks. As can be expected, not all ran smoothly. In fact one city could be described as an all-out disaster. While the other was barely competent.

Utica, New York • Utica is a small market located about an hour east from Syracuse on the New York State. The NWA was scheduled to appear on April 25, 1990. As could be expected, there was very little advertising done for the event. No television, and the only newspaper mention was a promotional piece that the local paper ran about the NWA coming to town a week before the were scheduled to appear. There were radio giveaways, however, no radio advertisements were heard by a Utica-based friend of mine. What makes this more surprising than usual is that the current NWA has never appeared in Utica. The main event of the show was to be Lex Luger versus Mark Callous, with the Steiners, The Midnight Express and Mike Rotunda appearing underneath. A total of five matches were scheduled.

On the day the card was scheduled, the NWA canceled it because of poor advance sales. This basically gives the WWF a strangle hold on the market for at least the next year. The card was announced about a week prior to the actual event. At least that's the first time my friend in Utica heard about it. This was an untested market and conventional wisdom would tell one to promote the card as hard as possible, particularly because a number of the local cable systems do not carry WTBS. Instead, they relied on the syndicated program to sell the show as they refused to buy television time, put up posters, buy radio airtime or supply the newspaper with anything more than a promotional piece stating the NWA is coming to Utica, because "Utica wrestling fans have demanded it." As could be expected, the card had a very poor advance. I don't know what else the NWA could have expected. How were the fans supposed to find out about the card?

Worse than the poor advance promotion of the card was the actual cancellation of the event. When a company is debuting in a market, the card, no matter how low the advance, should be ready to go unless nobody shows up. There were a number of fans who were disappointed by them canceling the card and they talk to the casual fans. Remember, word of mouth is the most effective form of advertising. To cancel a city premiere is a sign of instability and unprofessionalism (not that they advertised the premiere effectively). By canceling the card, they killed off the town without even presenting a single match. The next time they announce they are coming in, fans will be skeptical about attending. After all, why should they waste their time buying a ticket when they will have to return the day after the show for a refund? By canceling the card, they saved some money on April 25, but in the long run, they will lose more money as the Utica market has been for all practical purposes, killed. The next time the NWA tries to put on a show in Utica, it would be surprising to see better advance sales. It would be even more surprising to see the NWA show up. When the WWF comes to town, not only do fans know about the card well in advance, they are also sure the card will take place. With the NWA not only did very few people know about the card, those that did were left with a bad taste that will last for a long time.

Syracuse, New York • On May 9, 1990 the NWA came to Syracuse, New York with a five match lineup at the Bishop Ludden High School Gymnasium. The card was

announced over a month in advance and there was even a localized promo on the Saturday edition of World Wide Wrestling. Actually, Tony Schiavone spent one match plugging the Syracuse card and the rest of the interviews were the typical generic ones. But at least it was a step in the right direction. However, there were no radio or television spots bought, nor were there any newspaper ads placed.

The last time the NWA was in Syracuse was September, 1989. The card featured Flair versus Funk, Lex Luger, The Road Warriors, Sting, The Great Muta, The Midnight Express, The Freebirds, Steve Williams and Mike Rotunda. The *Observer* reported attendance at about 1,500 but that seemed like a high estimate. The NWA was so confident that they owned the town after pulling in over 1,000 in September (the WWF usually pulls in over 4,000), they presented the Steiners versus Doom as the main event for their second appearance. The NWA proved how strong they were in Syracuse this time by drawing what appeared to be about 400 people. Again, what were they expecting? Without any radio or newspaper and limited television exposure, how did they expect to draw people to the card? Combine this with the fact that Flair, Luger and The Road Warriors were not present, the NWA really couldn't be disappointed with the attendance figures.

The card itself was pretty decent. Mike Rotunda is over in his home town. The heels worked hard particularly The Midnight Express, The Samoans and Doom. Johnny Ace told a teenage girl the reason Shane Douglas wasn't there was because his plane was late. Reminded me of the Grinch, dressed as Santa Claus, telling Cindy Lou Hoo, who was no more than two, that he was taking the Christmas tree back to the North Pole to fix one of the lights and that he would be bringing it back before morning. Though, somehow, I don't think anyone asked Johnny Ace to carve the roast beast.

After the card, fans waited to see the various wrestlers. It was disappointing that Rick and Scott Steiner both raced to their cars plowing through the fans and didn't want to sign any autographs. While wrestlers may find it annoying to have fans clamoring over them after every show, they should realize that it is a blessing, not a curse. Opera singer Beverly Sills wrote a book a few years ago and subsequently did a promotional tour for it. As the tour came to an end, a fan sympathized with her about "having to go to dozens of cities and meet all these different people." "No," she said, "I don't have to go, I *get* to go. And I don't have to meet them. I *get* to meet them." (From *Beware The Naked Man Who Offers You His Shirt* by Harvey MacKay, published by William Morrow and Company Inc.). This is the type of attitude wrestlers should have when it comes to meeting fans and signing autographs. It only takes a little bit of time and it is something the fans will remember for a long time. They should realize their day in the spotlight is limited and there will be a time when very few, if any, fans will wish to get their autograph. They should enjoy it while they can. If they don't want attention, they are in the wrong business. To their credit, Teddy Long and Gary Capetta were very gracious when I offered them my compliments for their work that evening.

A few of the wrestlers may have hurt the NWA's ability to return to Bishop Ludden High School. A few of the heels, the Samoans in particular, yelled obscenities at the crowd repeatedly and made obscene gestures at them. Perhaps someone should have told them that this was a Catholic High School they were in and the faculty in attendance might not have taken too kindly to such behavior. Granted a high school auditorium isn't the most desirable location, but considering they couldn't sell it out, it doesn't seem logical to alienate the people who supplied them with the facility.

Overall, the card was very entertaining. It lasted close to two hours for five matches. The heels did most of the work, keeping crowd interested in the 20 minute-plus matches. No return date was announced. If the NWA was disappointed with the attendance, they should realize that their top draws are going to be necessary to get fans to come out in a market that is owned by the WWF. Until Syracuse becomes an established NWA city running a second-line card is not going to draw respectably. This is not to take anything away from

the wrestlers who appeared; most of them worked their tails off. However, until Syracuse is established for the NWA, they need Flair, Luger, The Road Warriors and Sting to bring in the crowds.

The NWA's handling of Utica was disgraceful and unprofessional. The NWA's handling of Syracuse demonstrated that they have no concept of how to establish a market. While the crowd loved the show, 400 people are not going to keep the NWA alive in Syracuse. The NWA has tried new and innovative ways to sell their Pay-Per-Views, but they are continuing to use ineffective methods to sell tickets to their house shows. The NWA has a long ways to go. In fact, if Utica and Syracuse are any indication, the NWA has a long ways to go before they receive a passing grade in Marketing 101, let alone compete in the WWF's territory.

Forget Arsenio, NWA Wrestlers Can't Even Feud

By - David Skolnick

If the recent week-long appearance of five of the top NWA wrestlers on *Family Feud* is any indication as to how these men will act during other public appearances, it may be best to stay away from the spotlight.

Although the GLOW women, especially Jackie Stallone, made a slightly worse showing of themselves, there were several embarrassing situations for the NWA wrestlers. There has been talk of mainstreaming NWA wrestlers onto other entertainment shows, but overall these five were ill-equipped and unprepared.

Lex Luger was, by far, the best of the bunch, as well as the brightest. However, that's not much of a compliment, since his partners on the Feud were Rick and Scott Steiner, Sting and Road Warrior Animal. Sting came off as a pompous loudmouth who would have done himself a world of good if he tried to relax in front of the camera. During the first show, Sting got into a confrontation with the game show judge over whether a back machine and a rowing machine were the same piece of equipment. He asked the judge who would know more about weights, the NWA wrestlers or the judge. The response from the judge was that he had been lifting weights before the Stinger was born. Then Sting in all his gentlemaness called the GLOW women "bimbos." Scott looked and acted like a dumb jock, but at least he was somewhat lovable.

Then there was Road Warrior Animal. When asked by host Ray Combs in the speed round name something you can't do with long hair, Animal responded: "Go for a walk." His next question was name a word that rhymes with "rush." Animal's answer: "cush." According to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, cush is the oldest of Ham's sons or the land inhabited by his descendants, thought to be on the west shore of the Red Sea. I'm sure that's exactly what the big man had in mind when he gave his response. Needless to say, both answers netted Animal zero points. Regardless of the poor showing, the NWA wrestlers were able to win 4 out of 5 games, but that was due to Jackie Stallone giving some of the most bizarre answers ever blurted out on a game show.

There are intelligent and personable people the NWA could have put on *Family Feud*. They should have kept Luger and Sting (as painful as his performance was) but added people like Jim Ross, Jim Cornette, Brian Pillman and Michael Hayes. They couldn't have been worse than Rick Steiner and Animal. This is not to say Sting, the Steiners and Animal gave the worst answers in *Family Feud* history. In fact, they came up with a few good ones. But, overall, they seemed confused and easily flustered. I know that I've been rather critical of the wrestlers, since after all, it is only a game. However, they are representing the promotion in front of a national audience. This was free publicity and a chance to show

that some of these monsters have brains as well as brawn.

If the NWA ever hopes to make it on Arsenio Hall, David Letterman or another talk show, they need to teach their wrestlers how to act in public. Keep the gimmick or act they have, but they should be able to apply that act in other situations. Insiders may joke about how bad of a wrestler the Honky Tonk Man is, but he's able to handle himself on television; the same can't be said of Animal or Sting.

Letters To The Editors

Re: "To be the Man..." - I can't disagree with anything you said, but isn't it a shame that everyone is calling for Flair's head? However, there comes a time...

Re: "Women" - I can't believe in our enlightened age of "equality for women," the hype and cry over a couple of women getting popped, when they do the first popping! Let's face it gang, the whole bits were scripted and the gals knew what was going down. Much more offensive to me is the very bright Missy Hyatt playing a total bimbo!

Re: Signs about other promotions at house shows - Yeah, I firmly believe in the freedom of speech and all it entails. But, go into Sears carrying a large sign saying "I shop at J.C. Penny" or "Sears Sucks" and see how long you last before being asked to leave. Let's remember that with "rights" comes "responsibility" something too many of us forget!

Ronald Queen
Sunrise, FL

Pe'D - While we agree that if you walked into Sears with a sign that says 'I shop at J.C. Penney' you'd be asked to leave, would you be asked to leave if you walked into Sears with a shopping bag that has J.C. Penney's logo on it? Of course not. Nor would you be asked to put your Penny's bag into a Sears' bag. While the analogy of the J.C. Penny sign is interesting, we're not sure it is appropriate. Shoppers holding up signs is not exactly common or encouraged at Sears, but it is at wrestling events. When shopping at Sears, you aren't exactly a paying customer until you buy their merchandise and generally you leave at that point to take it home. At a wrestling event, the fan has paid for the entertainment and at that point has the right to comment on the quality of the entertainment, as long as it does not interfere with other fans' enjoyment of the event. While it can be argued that signs obstruct the view of other fans, clearly, the WWF was not concerned about that in the Oakland 2 incident, otherwise they would have removed all of the signs in the building. Instead they chose to selectively restrain ideas that conflicted with their own, which is a violation of the First Amendment. The First Amendment cases are very clear in this matter. If the WWF is going to remove signs, they must remove them uniformly. This is not to defend those individuals who bring signs to WWF tapings. They are trying to give exposure to a competitors product at the WWF's expense. One can hardly call that mature behavior. Further, we agree that with rights comes responsibility, but the WWF does not have the authority to selectively decide who is being responsible and who is not. Indeed, how often would you say the WWF has acted responsibly?

I've just finished reading your April issue - I must say that it provided a great deal of food for thought. In my own mind I am experiencing several dichotomies. The racism in wrestling issue is foremost. While I could never defend Vince's obvious racism, I believe Piper's act leading up to and during Wrestlemania to be a matter of perception. I have followed Piper's career for over 10 years from his early Portland days through his stint in Georgia and on to the WWF. I don't think he is a racist. Perhaps his act was misguided, but I feel it was designed to place Allen Coage in the roll of a mean bully, not in the roll of

a mean black man. Remember the demographics that Vince is aiming at, namely kids. It was Piper's propensity for over-acting that caused the racist perception. Actually I can't find it in myself to blame any of the wrestlers who participate in Vince's stereotypes: if they don't then they get fired. I wonder how many of us, if placed in the same position, would let our principles take precedence over our ability to earn a living and support our families? The one case that comes to mind is Thunderbolt Patterson. I believe that after he made racist claims, which were probably true, he was blackballed (no pun intended) and lost his ability to make a decent living. When faced with the harsh realities of life what can one do? If OMG would have refused the Akeem transformation would he still be working for Vince?

The next question is what can be done? Can the law be used in some way to protect men from participating in promoters' racism? Also, does the business lend itself to racism? Pro wrestling has always been the ultimate good versus the ultimate evil. These days the lines are not as clear as they once were. Combine this with ethnic demographics and what come up is racism, which in the past has been mistakenly called pride in one's ethnic background. Wrestling has always had the good American versus the evil Russian, German or Oriental. In the old WWWF Territory, the audience was a large part Italian-American, a large part Latin-American, and a large part Black. I know because I was there. Sammartino, Morales, Rocca and Atlas and others were the faces, while Toro Tanaka, Fuji, the Sheik and many assorted "Germans" and "Russians" were the heels. These gimmicks don't work as well today (although Vince and others are not above trying them out occasionally) so the promoters look for other angles and gimmicks that will. There is no denying the fact that the Dusty-Sapphire gimmick is (as disgusting as it is to me) drawing and that obviously is the bottom line to the Vincés of the world.

Another question comes to mind. What do the non-sheet readers of the world think about all this? I think that we so-called "smart" fans tend to think quite a bit differently than the vast majority of the ticket buying public. After all, we have a forum for the intelligent discussion of many issues; what do they have - the Apter mags? Is the average fan even aware that racism is being used to generate the heat that promoters hope will get them buy tickets? I honestly don't know the answer to this one.

Jeff Rubin
Portland, OR

P&D - This is by no means a simple dilemma. As Jeff stated, how many of us would maintain a high ethical standard when our job is on the line? Particularly when there are few alternatives. We would hope that if we were put in the same situation, we would be able to stand by our principles. However, being two single men without any children to support, we don't have the responsibilities people with families incur. It would be much easier for us to walk out without affecting anyone but ourselves. Then again, if we couldn't proudly tell our sons and daughters what we did for a living we'd have no business doing that job or raising our children. After all, a parent is supposed to be a role model for his/her children. Can anyone honestly tell us that when someone acts like Slick and Akeem they are acting as responsible role models? We honestly hope not.

Capital Combat '90 - Return of The Screw Job

Capital Combat '90 looked like the turning point for the NWA. A new booker, new champions and a new direction for the company. That was until the main event when thousands of wrestling fans were treated to another screw job courtesy of the NWA's incomprehensible booking.

The stage was set. Luger was hyped as the underdog destined to win the gold in the steel

cage. A cage used to prevent outside interference. However, the Horsemen came to ringside and Ole Anderson got a hold of the switch to lift the cage. Barry Windham, who was conspicuous by his absence, appears, gets into the cage, attacks Luger and earns the DQ for Flair. He also earned the NWA its second screw job ending in as many Pay-Per-Views. Thus raising the total to three out of the last four.

This was one of the better PPVs in recent memory. The opening bouts built momentum and even matchups like Mark Callous vs. Johnny Ace and The Samoans vs. Tommy Rich and Mike Rotunda proved entertaining. Doom and The Midnight Express earned the World and U.S. Tag belts respectively. Thus giving them overdue recognition for their outstanding ring work. With the Steiner's and Pillman and Zenk able to break up, hopefully the NWA will put them into singles competition to augment the babyface side.

In fact, the PPV kept held our interest and looked like a turning point for the company. the ending left us stunned. Why would the NWA not deliver for a second time? Was Ole Anderson really named booker of the NWA? Or, did we see the return of Dusty Rhodes? The main event promised a conclusive finish. Promised one. There was a steel cage around the ring. No way in and no way out. That's what was promised. We were promised Robocop at ringside. They didn't deliver (not that we wanted Robocop, but they did promise it). In the end, Robocop wasn't at ringside. There wasn't a conclusive finish. Lex Luger was not the World Champion. In the end, the NWA, once again, did everything in its power to prevent the fans from getting something they wanted. When Ron Simmons was interviewed, he gave one of the most memorable monologues and kissed his World Tag Team Belt after saying "How sweet it is." This was a fantastic moment. The only problem is, the taste the NWA left in everyone's mouth was anything but sweet.

Capital Combat '90 could have been a memorable night. However, reflecting back on it, people will forget about the undercard and will remember the Flair/Luger charade. It looked like things were finally coming together for the NWA, but they weren't. Fans wanted to see Luger win the belt, or at least a conclusive finish. The NWA didn't deliver. That's the difference between the NWA and a successful wrestling promotion. Lets hope Bash '90 doesn't complete an uninterrupted screw job trilogy.

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